



Envision Arlington Diversity Task Group

Date: Monday, May 13, 2019
Time: 6:45 – 9:00PM
Location: Senior Center (2nd Floor)

Minutes

Attendance: Michaiah Healy, Katell Guellec, Mary Fusoni, Barbara Boltz, Ann Mathes, Noble Larson, Maryanne L, Fez, Mark Davila Witowski, Sophie Spink, Rajeev Soneja, Kevin H, Adam Chapdelaine, Julie Flaherty, Lynette Martyn, Brooks Harrelson, Mary Harrison, Betty Stone, Kelly Lynema, Louise Popkin, Lynette Culverhouse, Laura Kiesel, Erik Pohl, John Sanbonmatsu, Elizabeth Dray, Islam Genina, Purvi, Cass B, Pete, Nicole, Bob, Christine, Kathy, Ann, Nobel, Bengabati, Shaileen Pokress, Kaspar Kasparian

1. Welcome / Ice Breaker:
2. Name and what you like to do on a spring afternoon
3. Purpose
 - a. To discuss with Town Manager and Acting Police Chief the restorative justice (RJ) process and apology letter around the case of Lt Pedrini. They first provided context before taking questions from the group. We reviewed group agreements, and Lynette agreed to serve as process monitor. Emphasis will be on curiosity rather than judgment. The group agreed to: confidentiality, willingness to learn, honesty with ourselves, be respectful and honor multiple perspectives, presume the best of others.
4. Presentation by Adam Chapdelaine and Julie Flaherty
 - a. Adam Chapdelaine: Reviewed context of RJ with Lt Pedrini, which started in October 2018. A disciplinary hearing was in the works while Pedrini was on paid leave. Union members can go to arbitration for any discipline, and the track record of these decisions favors employees. Adam believed that seeking and losing a termination and having an “unrepentant and vindicated employee return to work was an unacceptable risk.” It was determined that Pedrini would be able to go through the RJ process and have a chance of understanding and be repentant. First circle came out with agreements, one of which was to convene a second circle with members of the community. There were two 4-5 hour sessions that resulted in further agreements.
 - b. Requirements included written public apology, going before all APD employees to discuss harm and what he learned, further community engagement, and punitive measures (suspension

w/out pay and admin work on return to be monitored). Adam believes that Lt Pedrini was sincere and has a better perspective of harm that he caused.

- c. Julie Flaherty, Acting Police Chief since mid-January 2019: She took part in the restorative circle. She was very disappointed with Lt Pedrini and supported Chief Ryan's initial decisions. She feels that the goal was to recognize the harm that has been done and hopes that trust can be rebuilt.

5. Group questions (2 mins each)

- a. What evidence is there that his new position is heartfelt and honest vs. his initial reaction? What is he doing to push out his new learning to those who had agreed with him?
- b. Would the same leniency be shown to other political points of view that were opposite to those of Lt Pedrini? I don't feel safe in this community. His views do not seem limited to him because they were sanctioned. How can people of color (POC) feel safe here?
- c. Upset because this is the first public town discussion in seven months. It was not "no tolerance" because he still has his job and his gun. This was a state-wide publication so there are many officers who support this.
- d. Is Lt Pedrini still active with The Sentinel? Other APD officers?
- e. Gov Baker recommended termination for a State Trooper found with racist statements. Also noted that RJ was not followed properly in this case. Was his comment about immigrants a racist comment? Made comparison to the many months required for a batterer to undergo rehabilitation after domestic violence.
- f. Important to name Lt Pedrini's comments as racist to help build back trust among community members. This includes POC, immigrants, those with addiction, and those with mental health challenges.
- g. Marginalized people who are most targeted by police have never reported because it is too scary for them. Our town is in denial on these issues. RJ should prioritize the impacted, which was not done. We are centering on him and his rehabilitation. Town officials should have listened to more people who have lived experience instead of closing ranks.
- h. RJ process should not just focus on the officer saying he's changed his mind, but it needs to focus on the impacted communities and their feelings, so that they can feel safe.
- i. No one reached out to potential victims, no one checked to ask "what can we do to make you feel more safe?" How do we know he isn't just saying this to keep his high-paid job?
- j. Emphasis needs to be on our most impacted neighbors. What do they need? You start by asking the impacted people what they need, not by assuming we know. His apology did not sound convincing -- there is a major contrast b/t the language he used in

his offensive article and the soft language he uses in his apology. His apology also touts his own strengths like a résumé.

- k. If one of your teachers made a racist comment, would you want them teaching your children? So why would you want a racist cop with a gun?

6. Group Discussion

- a. What would a community forum need to look like? Can we do some kind of community outreach, without a police presence, to hear if the community feels safe with the police? (Adam said yes.)
***Is there still an option for Pedrini not to get his gun back? (Adam says no, he will be back on the street 60 days from mid-April.) June 12 and June 19 this conversation will continue, so attendees were asked to hold those dates.
- b. *** Amendment Note (made at the August 19th DTG meeting): It was not clarified to attendees whether Lt Pedrini already had received his gun. Several people's notes indicated that the gun would be returned in June. In addition, Julie Flaherty noted that there were several steps to the RJ process that needed to be completed by Lt Pedrini. She said that his words were racist and that she has known him for 23 years and that he is not racist. Adam clearly stated that the words were racist.
- c. If people feel unsafe, there is an online form with APD and a committee reviews them. Or you can come to the front desk or contact Julie directly. All complaints are investigated. Julie will reach out to all who make complaints. There is not an option for languages other than English at this time.
- d. Other towns have community oversight committees and we need that, too. We also need a binding resolution for our sanctuary status because the trust in APD has been broken.

7. Further Discussion After Town Meeting Members Left: How are people feeling?

- a. My engine just started
- b. Revved up, heartened by voices here and space that has been made by the town
- c. Curious
- d. Overwhelmed
- e. Mixed feelings, confused, wish they hadn't been so self-protective
- f. Sad, frustrated, exhausted
- g. Excited, need for changes in leadership can happen, optimistic
- h. Heartening, there is still minimizing about continual racist acts
- i. Proud of Arlington and DTG to create a space, puts pressure on institutions even though change is so slow
- j. Grateful for such skillful facilitation, important to hear people speak from the heart and share what would feel like a genuine restoration of justice, have hope
- k. Who is thinking about what happens next in APD to ensure this doesn't happen again?

- l. Sad reading the Arlington List. Also could feel how conflicted Julie Flaherty is, what happens next is important
- m. Sad, disheartened, disgusted. Want to be hopeful that this is a beginning and not an end. Concerned that officer has his gun back and can that be looked at?
- n. Honored to be here, challenged, helpless, conversations like this are so important, in part as education.
- o. Exhausted, having trauma reaction.
- p. Tonight was triggering, didn't get much empathy from Adam, and Julie falls short too by not being able to say he's racist, she has to tow the party line. This also impacts people in other communities (like in Boston). The RJ group didn't get it, and even members of the HRC were asking for police protection from POC who voiced angry feelings.
- q. This is a battle of words, and when people like this control the narrative, we have lost. We need to hear another narrative, from authority figures of color and women.
- r. Angry with the white patriarchy, was good to feel the feminine energy in the room.
- s. Grateful for this space being created, first time to connect with others on this, "privilege is invisible to those who have it." APD needs implicit bias training.

People can post their thoughts and feelings on the DTG website.

Could there be a petition in the town to impact change?

The meeting concluded with a heartfelt thank you to Sophie, the DTG intern, who will be graduating high school and moving on to college.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.